Reflection

Wednesday, May 2, 2012

Writing Workshop

Varying sentence length as a revision strategy

* I also really like this lesson! I really like this unit, or Empowering Writers more broadly. I think that students really understood the strategy of sentence openers. It also invited a bit of dialogue in on-the-rug conferences about using commas to indicate a pause, so that was a nice opportunity.
* I am not sure how many students, even those engaged in revision, had an opportunity to try this on during their independent worktime, but I suggested to a few that they try in out so I’m hoping to see some results.
* Another nice thing that happened in workshop today was students making great use of past anchor charts (for intros and conclusions) and mentors (for intros). It’s nice to see kids requesting and using and leaning into resources.
* I am a little concerned about everyone being able to publish on Friday. I think many people will still be drafting.

Social Studies

Developing a colonial character

* This lesson felt joyful. I really enjoyed the idea of it, and I think kids enjoyed it, too. It was sort of like a creative writing pre-writing activity, in many ways. It was fun to tap into the class’s knowledge of historical fiction as a genre as background knowledge for this lesson.
* From looking over the work, it appears that students really understood the task at hand. However, the lesson did require some careful coaching and modeling and some responses were a bit underdeveloped.
* Creating a character is a difficult, synthesizing activity, so the cognitive demand was high.

Math

Relating Shapes and Solids

* I think that this lesson also garnered some strong learning. The idea of nets seems stable in kids minds, and it is a helpful way to re-examine the previous day’s lesson on faces, edges, and vertices (i.e. where do I see faces or edges on this net? How many?)
* In light of today’s work, however, I think it would be most helpful to move Friday’s nets lesson to tomorrow. I could see kids really grappling with the visualization required without using nets. I would like to give everyone the opportunity to touch and feel them.

IRA

Sojourner Truth’s Step-Stomp Stride

* What a wonderful book. The story is so powerful. At one moment, I felt like students were getting too silly, not taking the subject matter seriously enough, and I really pushed back. I think that Sojourner Truth is such an inspiring woman, and the role of woman of color in early feminist movements is such a vital history! I took it a little personally, and I think they realized how important it was to me to take her and her words very seriously.
* We didn’t have time to finish the epilogue or fully process the book, so that is what I would like to do tomorrow.

Celebration!

Liberty’s Kids and brownie bites

* The transition into the celebration was very excitable, so much so it became, at times, disrespectful.
* However, once we all got settled and started watching, everyone loved it!
* The video was a big hit. Kids loved seeing stories and characters they recognized from social studies!

Reading Workshop

Reading group check ins

* Because of the celebration and Just Words cutting into reading time on both ends for some kids, I decided to skip the minilesson to ensure everyone got an opportunity for some strong, sustained reading. It also gave me a chance to work with Gregor a bit more in depth.